

**SCOLIOSIS.** By Robert Roaf, M.A., M.Ch.Orth., F.R.C.S.(Ed. and Lond.). (Pp.XI +147; illustrated. 37s 6d). Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1966.

THIS is really a monograph, but it contains such a wealth of information, detail and theoretical problems that it could well have been expanded into a book. Professor Roaf has studied spinal disease for a life-time. Much of his knowledge and experience of the problems of scoliosis is woven into this monograph, together with experimental and research work, in a stimulating and often controversial manner. Many of his views are far from orthodox and this outlook is exciting for the reader, even though he may not agree.

There are excellent diagrams, illustrating not only mechanical but mathematical problems. There are valuable historical notes and illustrations. Some of the radiograph reproductions are poor.

The management of cases of this condition is covered well with emphasis on complete clinical examination and investigation. The use of the Milwaukee brace did not receive as much attention as the reviewer feels it merits. The section on surgical treatment is most comprehensive and one senses that it is in this field that Professor Roaf feels that the problem of scoliosis may be solved; that is in the light of present knowledge.

This is a publication of the high standard expected of its publishers. It is comprehensive, compelling and controversial, and it must be studied in detail by everyone interested in the complex problem of scoliosis.

R.I.W.

**THE ACUTE ABDOMEN.** Edited by W. W. Glass and G. E. Gould. (Pp. XI+155; figs. 9. 60s). Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins; Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1966.

THIS 150 page monograph, although entitled "The Acute Abdomen", is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the whole subject. Certain conditions have been selected for discussion, various diagnostic techniques described, and the "proper sequence of therapy" outlined rather than any rigid scheme of treatment detailed.

One failing, perhaps not so marked as in many multi-author books because all the authors come from one hospital, is the disparity in the approach of the different contributors. For example, the 4 page chapter on "Recognition of the acute surgical abdomen" sets out the principles of history taking and examination as for the undergraduate student. On the other hand 13 pages are devoted to a discussion of the "Value of peritoneal aspiration" – something that many specialists still question.

The opening paragraph contains sound advice for the more conservative physician: "with rare exceptions, if the diagnosis is uncertain, the conservative approach is to operate." However, more emphasis appears to be given to making the knife-happy surgeon aware of conditions outside his own speciality, which might be responsible for the acute abdomen. If this is one of the purposes of the authors they deserve to succeed. The chapters on "Medical conditions associated with acute abdominal pain" and "Intra-abdominal manifestations of connective tissue disease" are good, and as much space is given to them as to pure surgical conditions. A working knowledge of the commoner adult surgical emergencies, such as perforated peptic ulcer, acute intestinal obstruction and acute appendicitis, is assumed and they are not discussed. Caecal volvulus, diverticulitis and a plan of management for patients with multiple injuries constitute the general surgical chapters. Paediatric problems are dealt with in a more comprehensive fashion and "Medical illnesses that mimic the acute surgical abdomen" are described again in relation to the young patient. There are also chapters on urological and gynaecological conditions.

Those who have to deal with the acute abdomen, and, without the ready advice of specialist colleagues, have to differentiate medical and gynaecological problems from the purely surgical, should find valuable help in this book.

W.A.H.